United Nations A/52/PV.78

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

78th plenary meeting
Friday, 19 December 1997, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

The President: Before taking up the items scheduled for this afternoon, I should like to inform members that the programme budget implications of the draft resolution entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform", contained in document A/52/L.72/Rev.1, are currently being considered by the Fifth Committee.

In view of this, the General Assembly will first take up agenda items 20 (c) and 43 on Afghanistan, to take action on draft resolution A/52/L.68, then agenda item 60, on strengthening the United Nations system, to consider the draft decision contained in document A/52/L.71.

Thereafter, this meeting will be suspended until 4.30 p.m., at which time the report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.72/Rev.1 will, I hope, be available to enable us to take up agenda item 157, United Nations reform.

Agenda items 20 and 43 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(c) Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/52/358, A/52/536, A/52/682)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.68)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/740)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly, at its 74th plenary meeting on 16 December, concluded the debate on sub-item (c) of agenda item 20 and on agenda item 43.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.68. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/52/740.

I should like to announce that since the draft resolution was introduced, the following States have become co-sponsors: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chile, Czech Republic, Estonia, Fiji, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Malta, Morocco, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.68, which has two parts. Part A is entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan"; part B is entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security".

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May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.68?

Draft resolution A/52/L.68 was adopted (resolution 52/211 A and B).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 43.

Agenda item 60

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Draft decision A/52/L.71

The President: Next, the General Assembly will consider agenda item 60, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system". In this connection, the Assembly has before it a draft decision issued as document A/52/L.71.

I now give the floor to the representative of Canada to introduce draft decision A/52/L.71.

Mr. Hynes (Canada): It is an honour to present for the Assembly's consideration the draft decision entitled "Non-governmental organizations", as contained in document A/52/L.71.

When the Economic and Social Council concluded its comprehensive review of consultative arrangements between non-governmental organizations and the Council in 1996, it also adopted a decision and a Presidential Statement recommending that the General Assembly examine the broader question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in all areas of work of the United Nations.

A first round of discussions on this question was indeed held during the Assembly's fifty-first session under the leadership of the Ambassador of Pakistan as Chair of a special sub-group of the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. That sub-group, in turn, emphasized the importance of making early progress on this question, and it thus recommended further consideration of the matter by the General Assembly at its current session.

It was against this background that discussions on this matter were resumed this year, again under the impetus of Ambassador Kamal's leadership and guidance. There ensued a process of open-ended consultations, in which the delegation of Canada had the honour of playing some part as a facilitator.

Mr. President, you and colleagues may recall that even on the first day of the Assembly it was my personal ambition to preside over certain proceedings of the Assembly. I can assure you that this is not exactly what we had in mind, but we have been very happy to make a contribution. And it is in this capacity, as facilitator of the open-ended discussions, that we have the privilege of introducing this draft decision.

As with most important issues on which the Assembly must act, the proposal before us inevitably reflects a balancing of different views on how best to address the matter at hand. Many delegations would have preferred to have the current session take some immediate specific measures on this question, and we appreciate that the non-governmental organization community would have welcomed such a step.

At the same time, however, it was recognized by all that significant enduring progress on this issue, which all participating delegations affirmed was their wish, could best be achieved on a sound foundation of relevant information and analysis. It was thus agreed that the Secretary-General should be requested to prepare and circulate, during our current session, a report addressing a broad range of aspects of the question of non-governmental organization participation in the United Nations system for consideration and action by the Assembly at its fifty-third session. This is the essential purpose of the draft decision in document A/52/L.71.

When the Secretary-General addressed the conference of non-governmental organizations last month, he spoke eloquently of the commitment and contribution these organizations have brought to our common efforts in advancing all of the goals of the United Nations. He emphasized the crucial need to expand and deepen our ties with non-governmental organizations so as to take even better advantage of this indispensable asset in the future.

It is our sincere hope that this objective will be significantly advanced by the report to be prepared by the Secretary-General and by the action we have committed to undertake this year.

In closing, I would like to mention in particular the role that has been played by the Group of African States and by the Group of Arab States and their representatives in achieving the progress reflected in this draft decision — a decision that was, in fact, ultimately based on a piece of paper prepared by the African Group. The engagement of the States of these and, indeed, of all regions in the consideration of this issue, and the commitment that they have expressed to making real progress, augur very well for our future efforts to strengthen collaboration between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations from all parts of the world.

With these comments, I am honoured to commend the draft decision before us for the General Assembly's adoption by consensus, as agreed during the informal consultations.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft decision A/52/L.71, which has just been introduced by the representative of Canada.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision?

The draft decision was adopted.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 60.

As agreed at the beginning of this meeting, I will suspend the meeting until 4.30 sharp.

The meeting was suspended at 3.35 p.m. and resumed at 4.45 p.m.

Agenda item 157 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/950 and Add.1-7)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.72/Rev.1)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/741)

The President: When last September the General Assembly began consideration of the report of the Secretary-General "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform", contained in document A/51/950, only the biggest optimists could have predicted that before the adjournment of the main part of its fifty-second session, the Assembly would be in a position to reach a concluding stage regarding both actions described and recommendations proposed by the Secretary-General. Having said "concluding stage", I mean a political decision which enables the Secretary-General to proceed with the implementation of his proposals aimed at reforming the Organization, making it better equipped for pragmatic and more effective accomplishment of its mission in today's world and in the next millennium. Therefore, the "concluding stage" actually represents a first step on a road of transformations in the Organization. As the Secretary-General, has pointed out, reform of the Organization is not a single event but an ongoing process.

In this regard, I would like to praise the efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and his team towards enhancing the capacities and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization. It would be fair to say that deliberations on the proposals of the Secretary-General were not always smooth and easy, but finally the notion of reform, which has been in the air for the last couple of sessions of the General Assembly, became our guideline. We are now on the verge of adopting the second resolution on this matter, thus responding to all the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General.

The issue of United Nations reform has been at the centre of our deliberations since the very beginning of this session. Discussion first on actions and then on recommendations clearly demonstrated that Member States attach great importance to the matter. I believe it will not come as a surprise to anyone here if I say that the period separating our meeting today from the beginning of the session was filled to the maximum with intensive consultations covering the entire spectrum of the membership. They were conducted both by myself and by the Friends of the President and under different formats, including, in particular, informal plenary meetings and informal informals.

Their number and the fact that they lasted almost until the final day of the main part of the session also prove that the General Assembly has given very serious consideration to this issue. This particularly concerns

recommendations which were regarded by Member States as falling in their exclusive domain in terms of establishing the general framework and terms of their implementation.

The draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.72/Rev.1 was the result of lengthy, sometimes complex, but truly collective efforts seeking to reflect integrally the views of the entire membership. The initiative, creativity and readiness to search for compromise solutions demonstrated by delegations, combined with the constructive approaches formulated by groups of States, helped us to overcome differences and sometimes even polarization of positions — which existed at the beginning — and successfully reach mutually acceptable agreement.

I do not think there is a need to comment in detail on the draft resolution before us, especially considering that the day before yesterday we had a thorough discussion on it at the open-ended informal consultations of the General Assembly. Provisions of the draft resolution cover the whole spectrum of problems touched upon in the Secretary-General's report from the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General, the rationalization of the work of the General Assembly, the enhancement of the activities of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery and the improvement of cooperation on development issues and humanitarian affairs, to the strengthening of the financing and management of the Organization and some general proposals regarding long-term changes. The draft resolution confirms the strong political support which was given to the Secretary-General's programme of reform by Member States in the course of the general debate and during the adoption of the earlier resolution on actions, as well as in a number of other forums both within and outside the United Nations.

It clearly indicates the future need for action by the General Assembly, including its subsidiary bodies, and by other organs of the United Nations on the proposals regarding United Nations reform. That is particularly important on those issues where it is felt that more detailed information is required. These might be addressed later, when the relevant proposals will be considered within the appropriate organs and bodies to which they are referred.

As I have already noted, the draft resolution was prepared in the course of wide-ranging and in-depth consultations, with the explicit intention shown by all delegations to achieve positive results. In the light of the discussion which took place on 17 December at the meeting of the open-ended informal consultations of the General Assembly, additional efforts were made with a view to reaching a consensus on all the provisions of the draft resolution. Consequently, two changes were introduced to the previous text and are reflected in document A/52/L.72/Rev.1.

First, paragraph 5, after the word "Organization", now reads as follows:

> "to prevent conflict and maintain international peace and security, in full accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations".

Secondly, in paragraph 7, the phrase "agreed by the parties concerned" replaces the word "indicated", which appeared in the original text.

Those are the only changes made to the draft resolution which was considered at the last meeting of the open-ended informal consultations of the General Assembly, and I hope that with their introduction the draft resolution can be adopted by consensus.

My introduction of the draft resolution would be incomplete if I did not mention the role played by the representatives of Botswana, Mr. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, and of Ireland, Mr. John Campbell, in their capacity as Friends of the President, as well as their respective teams. Their dedication, tireless efforts and outstanding performance deserve our full appreciation. I am very grateful to them for assisting me with by sharing the burden related to the consultations on this issue.

Another key element of the success of this exercise was the continuous support and active involvement of the representatives of several major groups of States, in particular the European Union, the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I would like to praise the activities of the chairmen of those groups: Mr. Jean-Louis Wolzfeld of Luxembourg, Mr. Daudi N. Mwakawago of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Mr. Julio Londoño-Paredes of Colombia.

As we are approaching an important milestone in the work of this session, I would like to emphasize that the adoption of two resolutions on the issue of the United Nations reform will represent a vivid example of the ability of the United Nations — and in particular of its General Assembly, as the most representative organ — to adapt itself to the changing international environment, to find adequate responses to the new challenges and successfully to accomplish a substantial transformation of

its activities. It will also send a strong positive message to the outside world and to the general public, thus strengthening the role of the Organization and enhancing its capacity to carry out effectively the functions set out in the Charter.

I call now on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: On 12 November 1997, the General Assembly adopted a consensus resolution welcoming those elements of my reform package that fell within my jurisdiction as Secretary-General. Today, the Assembly is about to adopt a second draft resolution, this time endorsing many of my proposed reforms concerning elements that are within the domain of Member States. Together, we have taken major strides to initiate the process of revitalization that we all agree is necessary for the United Nations if it is to thrive in the twenty-first century. Together, we are making this a Reform Assembly.

The adoption of this draft resolution will establish the post of Deputy Secretary-General, which I view as indispensable to the new leadership and management of the Secretariat. I will move immediately to appoint a Deputy Secretary-General, following consultations with Member States, and I very much hope that she will join us early in the new year.

In the area of peace and security, the draft resolution contains provisions that will improve the ability of the Organization to detect potential threats to international peace and security, with the objective of supporting efforts by the Security Council and the Secretary-General to prevent conflicts. It also endorses steps to enhance the rapid deployment capacity of the Organization.

This draft resolution accepts my proposal to establish a development dividend funded by administrative savings, thereby reaffirming our collective commitment to the instrumental objective of efficiency as well as the substantive priority of economic and social development.

By adopting this draft resolution, the General Assembly will be expressing its willingness to rationalize intergovernmental machinery in the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and several subsidiary organs. The same is true of the regional commissions.

Finally, the draft resolution authorizes improvements in several other substantive areas of our work, including disarmament, development cooperation and humanitarian affairs.

We have every right to take great pride in these achievements. They speak well of the capacity of the United Nations to reform itself, where reform means embracing fundamental measures that strengthen the Organization and augment its efficacy. Moreover, the process whereby the two reform resolutions came to be adopted reflect the General Assembly at its best: innovative, pragmatic, and concerned with the greater good of the United Nations itself.

I thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership and your fair but firm hand in reaching these achievements. I want also to express our collective gratitude to your two friends, the outstanding Permanent Representatives of Botswana and Ireland, whose effective diplomatic skills helped produce today's consensus resolution.

Allow me also to thank the members of my own team who have assisted me throughout the process of initiating and coordinating the reform effort, drafting my report, and presenting its measures and proposals to this Assembly. Above all, I am indebted to Mr. Maurice Strong, the Executive Coordinator for Reform, a man of enormous energy, creativity and dedication to the Organization we all serve. I am also grateful to Mr. Joseph Connor, Under-Secretary-General for Management, who has worked tirelessly in a quest for administrative efficiencies and other managerial improvements. We would not be where we are today were it not for their efforts and those of the rest of our team.

Lack of time did not permit you, Mr. President, to consider in depth the measures of a longer-term nature within the framework of my reform report. I look forward to presenting more detailed proposals before the end of March, as you have requested.

I will present to you the outlines of a results-based budgeting system together with illustrations of how it would function in the context of the United Nations. As parliaments from New Zealand to Singapore have discovered, such a budgeting system increases the ability of legislatures to hold administrative entities accountable. But it does so in a manner that stimulates administrative efficiencies, encourages coherence of efforts and promotes agility. More effective results are achieved, typically at lower costs.

Similarly, in any organization, public or private, a rational process is required to routinely update its work. The idea of sunset provisions is intended to provide a specific time horizon for mandates, whereupon their continuation would require explicit renewal by the General Assembly. As you requested, I shall propose concrete measures to this effect.

I consider the Millennium Assembly to be of the utmost importance. As we enter the new century and the new millennium, we must do for the Organization what has not been done since its founding conference in San Francisco. We must articulate clearly a compelling epochal vision for the United Nations, reaffirming its place in the system of international organizations and its role in the international community as a whole.

In my judgement, the Millennium Assembly should review and reassess what the United Nations has endeavoured to achieve, as well as the means by which it has sought to achieve its ends, with an eye on how further to close the gap between aspiration and accomplishment. It should identify promising opportunities as well as significant shortcomings. It should re-examine the continued viability of the juridically based fragmentation that exists within the United Nations family as a whole. And it should provide focused strategic guidance for the United Nations in the era ahead.

Mr. President, you have heard me say before that reform is not an event, but a process. Today marks an exceedingly important event, to be sure, but the process must continue. And why must it continue? Because we are not engaged in reform for its own sake. We undertake it so that a more vital and more effective United Nations can make the contributions to its Member States — indeed, to the men, women and children throughout the world — that our historic mission calls upon us to make. The Charter, as is so often the case, puts it best: the purposes of the United Nations are to maintain international peace and security, to cooperate in achieving economic and social progress and to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The twentieth century has exhibited unprecedented outbursts of inhumanity. But it has also planted the seeds for greater human solidarity to come. Chief among them is the United Nations. Let us nourish this unique and precious expression of what unites us, and by virtue of enacting a self-fulfilling prophecy, the nations of the world will become ever more united.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his very encouraging statement.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): On 16 July 1997, six short months after assuming office and in a bold demonstration of dynamic leadership, the Secretary-General presented the General Assembly with a big United Nations reform package in a report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform". World leaders received the report with great interest and enthusiasm during the Assembly's general debate this session. To a large extent, they embraced the Secretary-General's reform package and committed their individual countries to participate actively in the reform process. They recognized that it is the responsibility of Member States to carry out the reform of the United Nations. However, I must confess that only a few of us here at the United Nations thought that the General Assembly would, at this stage, be in a position to adopt the draft resolution we have before us today.

The draft resolution marks a new beginning for the United Nations. It is unprecedented to the extent that it seeks to institute the most extensive and far-reaching reform measure ever adopted by the General Assembly. It contains, *inter alia*, an overhaul of the humanitarian activities of the United Nations. The post of Deputy Secretary-General would be established for the first time in the history of the United Nations. The draft resolution also calls for a serious discussion on issues of a fundamental nature next April when the Secretary-General will have presented more detailed proposals. This draft resolution would have far-reaching changes and consequences for the United Nations into the next millennium.

Having been honoured to serve as facilitator in the drafting of this draft resolution, I can confirm matter-of-factly that all delegations, without exception, were consulted, either by the facilitators themselves or by group leaders who negotiated with the facilitators, and they have been flexible and adaptable in their positions. We cannot, however, expect the draft resolution to give all answers or satisfy all preferences. It would indeed be foolhardy and unrealistic to have assumed that it could satisfy all expectations. But I have no doubt that the reforms we are authorizing in this draft resolution will go a long way in restoring international confidence in the United Nations and boost its image.

The draft resolution does not call for the taking of definitive decisions today on some of the more

controversial or complex recommendations in the Secretary-General's report, but these have not been forgotten. They are being referred to appropriate bodies for further consultations, and some will be considered by this body early in the new year after the Secretary-General has provided the additional clarifications sought by Member States. And to ensure that the postponement of a decision on these recommendations is not misunderstood or misinterpreted, the draft resolution provides specific time-frames for action on them.

It emerged quite clearly in the drafting of this draft resolution that there exists serious problems of lack of trust and confidence between the North and the South. These problems have made it difficult for the General Assembly to have a unified approach to the reform exercise. There is a detectable feeling of frustration among the developing countries due to what they consider unfulfilled expectations. Several developing countries, rightly or wrongly, tend to view United Nations reform with suspicion. They see the reform as an attempt to cut back on economic and social development activities, which, for very obvious reasons, they regard as the most important function of the United Nations. This is a serious problem that deserves urgent attention. All Member States should feel they have a stake in the reform process in order for it to be a real success. There must exist a spirit of partnership and cooperation among all of us, and it is my sincere hope that the adoption of this draft resolution by consensus will serve as a confidence-building measure to that end. Frustrations due to unrealized expectations should not blind us to the fact that the United Nations belongs to all of us. It is in the interest of all nations to reform the Organization to make it work better and become more responsive to the needs of the peoples of the world.

Let me recap. The facilitators could not have carried out this onerous task without the full backing and support of all delegations. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank all delegations most heartily for their cooperation and understanding. I wish to pay a special tribute to the Permanent Representatives of the United Republic of Tanzania, Ambassador Mwakawago, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77; the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Ambassador Londoño-Paredes of Colombia; Ambassador Wolzfeld, the Chairman of the European Union; and all those who spent sleepless nights and restless days with the facilitators trying to make sense out of the myriad of views and opinions expressed by Member States. I would also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to my co-facilitator, Ambassador Campbell of Ireland, not only for his patience and negotiating skills and his understanding of the shortcomings of others, but also — and this is very important — for the generous supply of Irish whiskey during our negotiating sessions, which went a long way towards sharpening our senses as we grappled with an endless avalanche of amendments from our numerous friends of the Group of 77. Ambassador Mwakawago, a teetotaller, deserves some prize for having survived the many difficult trips between the facilitators and the Group of 77.

To the Secretary-General, we say thank you and congratulations for your fearless commitment to the renewal of an organization with which you have been so intimately associated for so long. But as we applaud the dynamism of your leadership in the struggle that has enabled us to arrive at this happy juncture in the reform process, we must hasten to remind you, Mr. Secretary-General, of what you have said to us on several occasions in the past few months: "Reform is not an event but an ongoing process". We will continue to count on your leadership as we embark on the next stage of the process of transforming the United Nations.

And, last, but under no circumstances least, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your very brilliant leadership in this process and for the trust and confidence that you reposed in me and my Irish colleague in appointing us promoters of the process, the successful culmination of which we are witnessing here this afternoon.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): I have been told that I should make this statement from the rostrum, and since I'm a docile person and also since I'm sitting very close to the rostrum —

The President: But it should not be interpreted by the Ambassador of Botswana that now he should go to the podium to repeat his statement. Please proceed, Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland): I will be short. The draft resolution that the General Assembly is about to adopt marks an important step in our collective work to reform the United Nations.

In September, Heads of Delegation, in welcoming the Secretary-General's proposals for reform, underlined the political importance of making this Organization more relevant for the challenges of the next century. Today's draft resolution, and the resolution on actions of a month

ago, should give encouragement that the United Nations is firmly set on this road.

We have dealt in different ways with every aspect of the Secretary-General's proposals, including the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General and of a development account for the biennium 1998-1999.

We have set ourselves much to do in the months ahead, but if we are to adapt the United Nations to serve, as the Secretary-General himself has said in his report, "the poor, the hungry, the sick and the threatened", we can never be too ambitious. And there are other crucial questions to which we must find solutions before long if a poison is not to spread in the system.

I pay tribute to all that the Secretary-General has done to advance the ongoing work of reform of the United Nations with his proposals. I believe that actually from the beginning of this session of the General Assembly there has been a clear will on the part of all delegations to respond positively to those proposals — and this despite areas of strong disagreement. The Assembly will, I am sure, demonstrate this will again today and thereby confirm the respect and the confidence in which the Secretary-General is held by all delegations.

Ireland has been a firm advocate of United Nations reform. From the outset we offered the Secretary-General our whole-hearted support for the programme of reforms that he presented. And the adoption of this draft resolution will mark the successful completion of this stage of our work.

It was a special honour to be invited by you, Sir, to act, together with Ambassador Legwaila of Botswana, as Friend of the President in the preparation of this draft resolution. I was fortunate indeed to have a friend with such experience and authority.

We convened three sessions of informal informals, which allowed us to gather the views and helpful drafting suggestions of many delegations. We consulted widely from the beginning and all through the process. I should particularly like to thank the representatives of Tanzania, Colombia and Luxembourg, who spoke on behalf of larger groups of States. We could not have made the progress which we did without their cooperation and that also of many individual delegations. I wish to pay tribute to the willingness that all delegations showed in working with us as we attempted to bring positions together. And to Maurice Strong, the Executive Coordinator of United Nations reform, and his team we express our thanks for their guidance and help throughout.

In traditional style, you, Sir, arranged — if that is the word — a cliffhanger in the final steps to our agreement today. I want to pay tribute to your unremitting efforts to ensure this agreement and to express my admiration for the perseverance and commitment with which you have brought this stage of our work on the reform to completion.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.72/Rev.1. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/52/741, which has just been distributed in the General Assembly Hall. I should like to commend the Chairman of the Fifth Committee and the Committee itself for the most timely production of the report on the financial implications of this important document.

Before I give the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): When the Secretary-General issued document A/51/950, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform", on 14 July 1997, scarcely five months ago, it seemed impossible that the General Assembly might be adopting such far-reaching decisions today.

We meet today thanks to the initiative, constant effort and fluid communication of the Secretary-General, tirelessly assisted by his staff, with the Member States, and to the leadership and consensus-building skills of the President of the General Assembly. It is also due to the arduous work of the Ambassadors, initially, of Brazil and Norway and, in this phase, of Botswana and Ireland.

There was talk throughout of the urgent and overwhelming need to send a positive political message. However, we devoted little time to defining the message to be sent or to determining for whom it was intended. We shall now proceed to adopt this omnibus draft

resolution without a vote, but it cannot be claimed that it is really a consensus text.

It is not, first, because of its substance. The long and delicate process of negotiations, most of it still in progress with no possibility of predicting the results, was reduced to a few, generally ambiguous lines. We all know the price to be paid for ambiguity in this unipolar era, particularly when the ambiguity is frequently quite intentional.

The Cuban delegation wishes to make it clear that it will refrain from requesting a recorded vote on this draft resolution only for the sake of harmony within the General Assembly, and particularly of the unity of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China. This version of the text does not reflect the positions and proposals submitted in a precise, timely and repeated manner by the Joint Coordinating Committee, nor does it do so even within the logic of a negotiating process in which everyone makes concessions in the search for consensus; rather, it is the result of a lack of flexibility and real negotiations.

The delegation of the Republic of Cuba is compelled to express reservations on paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 8, 25, 26 and 27.

The draft resolution contains questionable elements. There is no permanent or institutional mechanism for the supply of information by Member States. It would be inconsistent to try to improve something that is practised on a merely optional and discretional basis, without agreeing beforehand on the guiding bases and principles.

Conflict prevention could perhaps be considered as one of the many elements involved in the maintenance of international peace and security. If any attempt were made to make a list of such elements, however, it would have to include many others that affect international peace and security and relations of respect and cooperation between States, such as the implementation of unilateral measures of political, economic and financial coercion and the arbitrary and indefinite imposition of Security Council sanctions that do not take humanitarian limitations into account. Nor is there any agreed concept of conflict prevention. It would also have been necessary to include in the draft resolution an express reference to the operational guidelines and agreed concepts by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

This texts lacks a clear reference to the principle of consent by the host Government concerned in a peacekeeping operation with regard to the provisional application of model agreements. My delegation interprets the amendment recently made to paragraph 7 as a reaffirmation of the principle of consent.

The concept of the system of results-based budgeting is entirely new and enjoys neither the understanding nor the acceptance of the Member States.

The relevant paragraphs on the recommendations of the Secretary General and the broad concept of future challenges for the Organization depart from the Secretary-General's proposal, which at no time recommended the establishment of so-called priorities with respect to international events and conferences, even early in the preparation process, the negotiation of which must not be prejudged. There are also other controversial, vague and questionable wording on other subjects, which we will not go into now because time is short.

The delegation of Cuba has always worked to achieve consensus and has demonstrated in practice, without abandoning its positions of principles, that it will not be guided by narrow national interests or use shady political tactics.

We have therefore been alarmed at the violations of recognized practices and procedures in this supersonic process. Under the pretext of the search for consensus, stages have been omitted and pressure brought to bear, which is even more serious when the subjects of the draft resolution are solely and completely within the competence of the General Assembly.

Negotiations through representatives of groups of States cannot ignore or take the place of the national positions of Member States, which are sovereign and equal.

Informal, democratic, transparent, universal, open and announced negotiations held in this official Headquarters with technical services cannot be replaced by other forms of negotiations which, in lacking these elements, could only be considered complementary to them, if even that.

This text which we are about to adopt without a vote has simply not been sufficiently negotiated, and the agitated informal consultations held in Conference Room 4 with only two hours' notice were considered by some delegations merely as an exchange of views and not negotiations on a text which had supposedly been closed.

In sharp contrast, one of the Main Committees has been obliged to resume its work after having voted six times on resolutions which have traditionally been consensus resolutions and which had received only one negative vote and no abstentions, in order to accept a capricious opinion for the sake of a supposed consensus which, in reality, was tantamount to a veto. The most unusual thing is that an attempt has been made to present those of us who have ceded too much and who have been the recipients of too many pressures as the executioners of the practice of consensus. However, we are pleased that the consultations ultimately continued and that some of the legitimate proposals were accepted. This shows once again that mutually respectful negotiations are viable and fruitful.

Finally, what will be the political message we send? How will it be interpreted and what response will there be to it?

Our message is that we are only prepared to accept a reform which makes the United Nations more democratic and re-establishes in its practices the principles of the Charter, which are frequently violated or reinterpreted; which confirms the sovereign equality of States and eliminates the anti-democratic and anachronistic veto; which makes the Security Council democratic and places it at the service of all Member States; which re-establishes the now-usurped or diminished powers of the General Assembly; which does not confuse the imperial veto with the overwhelming consensus of the Member States; which makes development — a fundamental human right — its priority; which promotes the universality, interdependence and non-selectivity of the full exercise of all human rights of all men and women and delivers us from their political manipulation; and which solves the financial problems of the United Nations on the basis of making payments on time, fully and without conditions, while drawing a distinction between the political conditions of the main debtor and those who cannot pay because they have to be able to feed themselves first.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am speaking on behalf of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to join the consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.72/Rev.1, on the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" [A/51/950].

But allow me first to extend the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General for his tireless and valuable efforts for the reform of the Organization, as well as for his lucid and interesting remarks. I would also like to assure him of our full cooperation as we continue our work on the reform.

Your tireless efforts, Mr. President, as well as those of the two facilitators, are also to be appreciated.

We have come a long way towards this end after a lot of energy and efforts were devoted in different meetings and at different stages to arrive at a text which, to be frank, is a best a compromise text. Hence, if I may say so, it is far from our expectations with regards to certain recommendations.

As we have presented our views on different elements under discussion in the course of the open-ended informal consultations, I am not inclined to delve in the pertinent details at this juncture. However, there are certain areas which I deem necessary to mention, even briefly.

While all sections of the draft resolution are important and deal with sensitive issues, section C, which deals with the question of peace and security, is nevertheless of particular significance and sensitivity to the entire international community, including my country. In this context, I would like to underline for the record that the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of all States must be fully respected and complied with in the implementation of the draft resolution.

Having made this point, and looking to the future in the continuation of our collective work on the implementation of the draft resolution, we look forward to having a fully transparent and more participatory procedure to ensure the active participation and contribution of the whole membership of the Organization. As proposed by various delegations, including my own, during the earlier stages of the informal consultations, the establishment of open-ended working groups for future considerations in the course of the ongoing process of reform is both suitable and desirable.

On this note I close my brief statement.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: The Russian delegation would like to express its satisfaction in connection with the successful completion by the General Assembly of this important phase of the consideration of the Secretary-General's report "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for

Reform". We consider that the omnibus draft resolution on the Secretary-General's reform recommendations will become a harmonious complement to resolution 52/12. The two resolutions taken together constitute a kind of point of reference for the future implementation of the programme of restructuring the United Nations.

We confirm our generally positive assessment of the work that has been done and pay due tribute to those who inspired and organized it: the Secretary-General and his team; and the President of the General Assembly, his staff and his Friends — the Permanent Representatives of Botswana and Ireland. We note the contribution of the chairmen of the various groups and all delegations without exception in achieving a consensus.

Our delegation has participated actively in the consideration of all the reform proposals of the Secretary-General. We fully recognize that the draft resolution now before us is not a mental design for faultless reform, but a compromise product of the collective efforts of Member States.

Naturally, to take account in this text of all the wishes and interests of the various delegations is practically impossible. Final agreement has not been reached on all recommendations, some of which have been referred for further consideration to the relevant United Nations organs.

It is therefore natural for the Russian delegation to continue to take a particular stance on a number of issues. We consider, *inter alia*, that the procedure for the appointment of the first Deputy Secretary-General, if in fact this post is established, should be open and democratic. As before, we do not support the idea of changing the voluntary character of the core resource formation of United Nations funds and programmes, of establishing a revolving fund, or of the non-reimbursement to Member States of the unexpended balance of the regular budget. In joining the consensus, it was our understanding that these, like a number of other recommendations, were being referred for further consideration, after which the Secretary-General, as he has confirmed today, would be making specific additional proposals.

We are equally convinced that there is no need to raise the question of a general overhaul of the International Civil Service Commission. The General Assembly, *inter alia*, has decided to establish a development account under the programme budget for 1998-1999, and we see in this important decision first of all a manifestation of the consensus in favour of increasing the resources that would be made available to the Organization in this critically important area. However, our delegation, like many others, continues to harbour the impression that there has not been a thorough enough elaboration of the legal modalities for the operation of this account within existing financial mechanisms and rules of the United Nations.

As for the long-term initiatives of the Secretary-General, which in the final analysis may lead to a review of certain provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, all delegations, as we understand it, agree that these would require thorough and scrupulous analysis, with full consideration given to the views of Member States. This is particularly applicable to the idea of the new sphere of responsibility for the Trusteeship Council.

The Secretary-General's comment that reform is not an event but a process has already become an aphorism. It is clear that the theme of reform will be continued in the course of the present and subsequent sessions of the General Assembly. We sincerely hope that the process of renewal and comprehensive restructuring of the Organization will proceed in close cooperation between the Secretary-General and the Member States, and will make it possible to achieve new and tangible results in strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations and its system as the main multilateral bulwark for contemporary international relations.

Let me once again congratulate you, Sir, as well as the Secretary-General and all those who have helped you achieve this successful outcome.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.72/Rev.1, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.72/Rev.1 without a vote?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/12 B).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): The United States delegation joins its colleagues today in consensus agreement on "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform". This text represents the United Nations strongest, most decisive action to date for reforming this Organization.

Building upon several years of reform initiatives, Secretary-General Annan's reform proposals and a robust general debate by world leaders in September, we are today turning words into actions, ideas into decisions and, ultimately, problems into solutions.

Today's consensus is not a final product. It is simply the beginning of a difficult journey. But it sets a course for the hands-on, strategic management of this Organization to a brighter future ahead. As the "reform Assembly" continues into 1998, we must maintain the momentum that has been building among the Member States.

Member States know that the Organization needs reform. Its design, rules and procedures have been hard-pressed to keep up with today's new breed of global, transnational challenges, such as terrorism, the environment, narcotics, intra-State rivalries, ethnic conflict and refugees. Reform has become the concept for making the United Nations more efficient, more effective and better able to meet the unforeseen threats and opportunities that will arise in the next century.

An organization fit for this ambitious goal is challenging to define and even more challenging to manage. Yet with less than a year in office, the Secretary-General has used his chief administrator pen with authority. We agreed by consensus last month with his reform actions laid out in July in "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform". A first-ever cabinet and a strategic management group are among his innovations, coupled with merged departments and ongoing overhead savings projects. Among other things, these actions have enabled the United Nations to live within its budget cap this biennium.

But a challenging organization requires, most of all, that its Member States use their authority with ever more vigour. Together we must strategically manage this Organization with no less commitment than we bring to the pursuit of our shared political interests. Today's resolution for the Secretary-General's reform recommendations is a testament to this new commitment. It was designed to work with the Secretary-General by tracking point-for-point with his reform package. There was no element left untouched by Member State delegations.

Key among today's actions is the creation of a long-overdue Deputy Secretary-General post. This is a critical part of a larger effort to organize better the Organization and to enhance a culture of accountability, effectiveness and efficiency, including in sustainable development activities. We expect that the Deputy would enable the Secretary-General to utilize more effectively his good offices on behalf of the maintenance of international peace and security.

On related points, the resolution calls for measures to enhance the rapid deployment capacity of the United Nations in peacekeeping operations and enables quicker status-of-forces agreements between the United Nations and host Governments. And as an incentive for efficiency, it calls for the redirection of administrative savings into programmes that directly assist the developing world.

Delegations were challenged by the Secretary-General's recommendations for results-based budgeting — that is, accountability for performance by establishing performance yardsticks — and sunset provisions on United Nations programmes — that is, periodic review for programme effectiveness for determining best use of programmatic resources — and others. In turn, the Secretary-General has pledged to redouble his responsiveness and provide more information by the end of March. In the past such measures would have routinely been scheduled for the far-off future. It is time to move forward as swiftly as possible in the remainder of this session, as envisaged by the resolution.

Sir, your foresight and leadership have been invaluable in the course of negotiations, and our gratitude is deep. Our colleagues the Permanent Representative of Botswana, Ambassador Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, and the Permanent Representative of Ireland, Ambassador John Campbell, spared no effort as the "Friends of the President" in their skilful handling of consultations over these many weeks. Our thanks and admiration go to them, as well as to our Ambassador for reform, Richard Sklar.

We also thank the Secretary-General's office for its valuable counsel, which was frequently sought in the course of deliberations. Most of all, we extend our gratitude to all Member-State colleagues for their

initiative, creativity and persistence in helping reach today's consensus.

As the Secretary-General has stated, reform is a process, not an event. And today that process of reform is beginning. Moreover, our collective goal of a more efficient and effective United Nations is an even more achievable reality.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish to make some brief remarks on behalf of the Group of 77 and China following the adoption of resolution 52/12 B under agenda item 157, "United Nations reform: measures and proposals". I should like at the outset to reiterate how much we appreciate you, Mr. President, for your great diplomatic skills, leadership and sense of humour in conducting the negotiations on the Secretary-General's United Nations reform proposals.

We have come a long way since the commencement of the deliberations on this important agenda item earlier this year. We are mindful of the fact that the first track was launched by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in March. At the beginning there existed an atmosphere of uncertainty and hesitancy about starting serious consideration of the Secretary-General's report "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform". It was preferred to await the pronouncements of our leaders in the general debate before embarking on serious negotiations on reform. The indications of support given by our leaders and the position taken by the ministers of the Group of 77 provided a firm basis for discussion of the Secretary-General's reform proposals. The ministerial declarations of both the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries clearly supported the Secretary-General's efforts and called for an in-depth study of his reform proposals.

The ministerial declaration strongly endorsed the statement of principles on United Nations reform adopted at the 22nd meeting of the chairmen and coordinators of the chapters of the Group of 77, held at Geneva in July 1997. Those principles stressed, *inter alia*: that the reform process must strengthen the ability of the United Nations to fulfil its role and functions in the development field, and must in particular ensure the enhancement of the capacity of the Organization to address development issues and to respond effectively to the development needs of the developing countries; that reform of the United Nations should be undertaken in accordance with the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions; and that a prerequisite for enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations is stable, predictable and adequate financing for the United Nations. Those principles have been stressed in our position papers on both actions and recommendations.

It is encouraging to note that delegations managed to overcome their differences and negotiated vigorously prior to the adoption of the resolutions on actions and, today, on recommendations. It is our hope that when these resolutions are implemented, the concerns and views expressed, particularly by the major groups such as the Group of 77 and China and the non-aligned countries, will be fully taken into account as agreed.

I should like to reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's initiative on reform and for modernizing the United Nations based on his proposals as well as those made by other relevant United Nations bodies. In the same vein, I should like to thank the members of the Group of 77 and China and of the Non-Aligned Movement for the great support and solidarity extended to me during the negotiations on reform and during the other processes.

Today we have witnessed the happy ending of a major enterprise, part of the discussion of United Nations reforms, in which all of us were involved. It is a time to celebrate, but at the same time a lot of work lies ahead for the implementation of the proposals and measures that have been agreed upon.

Last but not least, I should like to thank the facilitators — my colleague and brother Ambassador Legwaila of Botswana and Ambassador Campbell of Ireland — our partners, and the staff assisting the Secretary-General in the reform process for their cooperation during the negotiations on the reform of the United Nations. To our partners, I should like to underscore in particular our appreciation for their understanding of the concerns of the largest group in the United Nations. I would also like to thank my own staff in the office of the Chairman of the Group of 77 for their very hard work.

At this time, and bearing in mind that we are close to the holiday season, allow me, Mr. President, to wish you, the Secretary-General and the delegations of all Member States happy holidays and a happy and prosperous new year.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): After strenuous efforts and hard work of over a month, the General Assembly has finally adopted a

resolution on the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on reform. On behalf of the Chinese delegation, Sir, I would like to thank you and your two facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Botswana and of Ireland, for your assiduous work.

The fact that the General Assembly has adopted this resolution on the Secretary-General's reform proposals by consensus demonstrates once again the strong political will and firm commitment of Member States regarding reform of the United Nations. However, resolution 52/12 B is far from being the end of the reform process. Rather, it is only a starting point for Member States to explore the orientations and measures needed to reform the United Nations.

I should like to take this opportunity today to emphasize several points.

First, the resolution decides, for the first time, to establish the post of Deputy Secretary-General in the Secretariat of the United Nations. We believe that the creation of such a post is a major reform measure for the high-level management of the United Nations Secretariat. The Chinese delegation participated in discussions on this matter in a serious and responsible manner. According to the Secretary-General's proposal, the Deputy Secretary-General will be an integral part of the Office of the Secretary-General, with responsibilities delegated by the Secretary-General. The Deputy Secretary-General is not to perform duties conferred upon the Secretary-General by the United Nations Charter, including the duty of reporting to the General Assembly and the Security Council; nor is he or she to constitute a separate decision-making layer. It is very important that the resolution clearly stipulates those points.

We hope that the establishment of such a post will help the Secretary-General better to perform the various duties and responsibilities entrusted to him by the Charter. It is also our hope that the Secretary-General will consult widely with Member States on the appointment of the Deputy Secretary-General and take into due consideration the principle of equitable geographical distribution, as repeatedly affirmed by the General Assembly.

Secondly, I should like to refer to section J of the resolution, on longer-term changes. The Secretary-General pointed out in his reform report that some reform measures are of a fundamental nature on which no political consensus yet exists, and some proposals are presented to Member States only for longer-term consideration. We believe that the proposals listed in section J are preliminary ideas of the Secretary-General to be considered by Member States, rather than the result of deliberations by Member States. Therefore, they do not necessarily represent the future reform direction of the United Nations. We hope that before putting forward his report on those issues, the Secretary-General will solicit fully the views of the vast number of Member States, and we believe that these matters should be referred to the competent bodies of the United Nations for serious study and discussion.

Thirdly, the General Assembly at its current session has not had the opportunity to have an in-depth discussion on the substantive issues referred to in other parts of the resolution. As we pointed out in our statement of 12 November, we believe that the recommendations have touched upon questions to be discussed and decided upon by Member States, and therefore call for a serious and thorough study by all. We hope that, now that the resolution has been adopted, the various intergovernmental bodies concerned will be able to hold in-depth discussions on relevant issues referred to in the resolution so that common ground can be reached on that basis.

The reform of the United Nations is a continuous and ongoing process. From a long-term perspective, it should focus on peace and development, the two major themes of our times. Peace is an important prerequisite for human subsistence and development, while development is the basis for the maintenance of peace and stability and the realization of human progress. The two should complement each other, with both being given equal importance and attention. It is the hope of the vast number of developing countries that the reform will reverse the tendency in the United Nations to pay inadequate attention to development and enhance in real terms the United Nations role in promoting world development and cooperation. We believe this is an important yardstick for measuring whether the reform will finally result in success. At the same time, the reform should help maintain diversity within the United Nations. The United Nations is the epitome of the diversified world. Only by recognizing and respecting the diversity of the world is it possible for countries to coexist in peace and move ahead together, for the principle of universality of the United Nations to be best manifested and for the United Nations, the most important intergovernmental Organization, to maintain its vibrant vitality and to continue to play its irreplaceable role in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Owada (Japan): The delegation of Japan welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution A/52/L.72/Rev.1, on renewing the United Nations, which reflects the consideration by the General Assembly of the Secretary-General's report and the recommendations contained therein. This resolution is an important milestone in the ongoing process of reforming the United Nations in order to strengthen its capacity and effectiveness. I should like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the facilitators, Ambassador Legwaila and Ambassador Campbell, for the tireless efforts made to formulate a text that we were able to adopt by consensus.

My delegation congratulates the Secretary-General on his efforts to present a reform package which has been warmly endorsed by this General Assembly.

The reform proposed by the Secretary-General is aimed at strengthening the leadership role of the Secretary-General, improving coordination among the various bodies active in each field, such as peace and security, economic and social affairs, development, human rights and humanitarian affairs, and ensuring greater cooperation among the different departments and programmes, in order to achieve a fully integrated and interactive United Nations.

The recommendations contained in the resolution cover wide-ranging issues, such as the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General; the review of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, as well as its organization and work methods; the greater integration of intergovernmental oversight of funds and programmes; and greater coherence and coordination among humanitarian activities. All of these proposals are expected to serve those purposes.

The idea of saving for reinvestment, which Japan introduced, will finally materialize with the establishment of a development account in the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. Japan regards this as one of the most important elements in the reform proposal. We in Japan hope that the development account will be fully operational as early as next year, after examination of the details of the implementation of the account at the resumed session next spring.

Although the resolution just adopted is important, it represents but one stage in the overall process of reform. The agreement reached in the resolution on the various recommendations of the Secretary-General should be faithfully implemented. At the same time, there are a number of proposals which relevant competent United Nations bodies and Member States have to consider in depth and expeditiously, including proposals for longer-term changes, such as the sunset provisions.

While the proposal presented by the Secretary-General basically ranges over structural and organizational aspects of reform, I would like to reiterate Japan's general view that the United Nations as a whole should be reformed in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Thus, a reform package should comprise reforms in the political area, including the Security Council; the economic area, especially as regards development; and the financial area, with particular attention to fair and equitable methods of financing for the activities of the Organization.

It is Japan's hope that the adoption of this resolution will serve to maintain the momentum that has been generated so far and, indeed, give greater impetus to the realization of a broad and fundamental reform of the Organization. Only if the United Nations is renewed in this way will it be capable of responding to the expectations of the international community and meeting the many challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to express to you, Sir, our deep appreciation for the constructive role you have played so that a consensus could be achieved on the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the reform of the United Nations. Those efforts culminated today in the adoption of this resolution.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his initiative and for the extraordinary effort he made in the course of a relatively short period of time in order to streamline the United Nations. I also wish to thank the ambassadors of Ireland and Botswana, who acted as Friends of the President, and I also pay tribute to Mr. Maurice Strong and his efficient team.

The delegation of Egypt would like to highlight the following points regarding the resolution adopted today. Firstly, we welcome the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General, and we hope that the creation of such a post will enhance the work of the United Nations.

Secondly, with regard to operative paragraph 5, the delegation of Egypt would like to put on record its understanding that undertaking efforts to prevent conflict will require both consultation with and the prior agreement of the State concerned.

Thirdly, with regard to operative paragraph 7, which addresses the peacekeeping operations undertaking under Chapter VI of the Charter, the delegation of Egypt supports the recommendation that the Security Council, in establishing such a peacekeeping operation, should prescribe a time-frame for the conclusion of the status-of-forces agreement between the Secretariat and the Government concerned. In our view, this represents a positive step towards closing some loopholes that existed in the arrangements worked out for some peacekeeping operations. However, the delegation of Egypt would like to stress that it would be inappropriate to apply a model status-of-forces agreement worked out by one party only, namely the Secretariat, even on a provisional basis. Our understanding of this paragraph's text as it stands is that it implies that the consent of the host Government is a precondition to the provisional application of the model agreement pending the conclusion of a permanent accord.

Regarding peacekeeping operations, we should not forget, especially here in the General Assembly Hall, that the Assembly has the power to establish peacekeeping operations. And if currently the Security Council is establishing these operations, in the future it might be possible for the General Assembly to do so, for one reason or another, on the basis of the precedent set in 1956, when the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was established in the Sinai. The delegation of Egypt invites all to bear this fact in mind.

In closing, I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the delegation of Egypt to the larger reform process, with a view to enhancing the performance of the Organization in all spheres of its operations.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I should like to commend you, Sir, for the able and eminent leadership with which you have guided our important deliberations on the report of the Secretary-General concerning the reform of the United Nations. I would also like to thank the Friends of the President, the distinguished ambassadors of Botswana and Ireland, Ambassador Joseph Legwaila and Ambassador John Campbell, for their invaluable contribution in undertaking extensive and intensive informal consultations.

Subsequent to the Assembly's approval on 12 November of the Secretary-General's proposed actions, which were set out in his report, my delegation believes that it was indeed significant and most timely for this body to take decisive action this afternoon on the recommendations, in the form of a resolution that embodies the consensus of the Member States. Reflecting the particular importance my delegation attaches to the reform of the United Nations, we have actively participated in the deliberations of the General Assembly to that end, especially for the past several months. On many occasions we have expressed support for proposals aimed at strengthening the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization, thereby improving its ability to realize its full potential in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

We note that the resolution we have just adopted by consensus is a product of countless hours of active deliberation and hard-won compromise. As we see it, it represents the search for and achievement of a balance of differing views. But we also recognize that the resolution comprises some elements that may be less than perfect. In fact, my delegation would have been much happier and more encouraged if we had been able to take more positive and concrete action on some key proposals, such as the Millennium Assembly and certain sunset provisions, the decisions on which were deferred to a later stage for further deliberations.

By the same token, we wish to reiterate our strong hope that the actions and recommendations approved by this body will be implemented as soon as possible, with the blessing of all Member States, while full account is taken of the views they have expressed in the course of consultations. My delegation also hopes that our action today will provide the international community with an opportunity to assess positively the serious commitment of the entire United Nations membership to the process of reform that the Secretary-General has initiated since assuming responsibility, and that it will convey an unmistakable message to the international community that the entire membership is seriously committed to the reform of the United Nations so that the Organization can more effectively respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland,

Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as Iceland and Liechtenstein, endorse this statement.

Today, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 52/12 B, by means of which the Member States are responding to the recommendations contained in the programme for reform of the United Nations presented by the Secretary-General on 16 July 1997.

Allow me in this regard, Sir, to pay particular tribute to your perseverance and patience, to the commitment of the two cofacilitators, Permanent Representatives Joseph Legwaila of Botswana and John Campbell of Ireland, and to the effective assistance provided by the team led by Mr. Maurice Strong. Your commitment and your know-how were a decisive factor in the success of the negotiations, which were detailed and sometimes difficult and which extended for many weeks. We would like to convey to you, as well as to the facilitators and your colleagues, our gratitude for the compromise that was finally achieved.

The reforms proposed, which the Secretary-General has called a "silent revolution", are ambitious. Their objective is to move the Organization towards a greater convergence of objectives, increased cohesion of efforts and greater flexibility, thus enabling it to meet the requirements of an ever more dynamic and more complex international reality and to fulfil better its mandates in the service of the Member States.

On 12 November 1997, the General Assembly, in adopting resolution 52/12, solemnly demonstrated its support for the message sent and choices made by the Secretary-General, and mandated him to implement the measures falling within the scope of his own authority.

Today, we are concluding the second phase of our examination of the reform programme. The resolution that we have just adopted takes position on the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in the areas that fall to the responsibility of the Member States. In addition to the decision to create a post of Deputy Secretary-General, the Assembly is endorsing the recommendations made to it and is taking decisions in fields as varied as the rationalization of the General Assembly's proceedings, economic and social questions, humanitarian affairs and the management of the Organization.

This does not mean, however, that our exercise is now complete. In many areas, the complexity or sensitivity of which requires more detailed examination, the resolution calls for the submission of specific proposals or reports, and invites other organs to examine the matter in depth.

In the coming months, therefore, we shall have to return to a good number of issues broached in the Secretary-General's report. The in-depth reform of our Organization will be the result not of one isolated act, but rather of a process that will have to be at the very heart of our concerns and action throughout the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The European Union, for its part, will contribute actively to this effort, as it has done over the past three months. In effect, the United Nations process of renewal and adaptation to the new realities of the twenty-first century is in the interests both of our Organization and of all its Members. The European Union is convinced of the importance for the international community of a multilateral Organization of universal scope that is revitalized and effectively accomplishes the mission which it has unceasingly carried out and which consists in working to serve peace, progress and development.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): Today, the General Assembly is convening in a meeting of historic importance to the process of considering the package of reforms sent to us by the Secretary-General. When we took on this high-priority issue early in the session, we were all aware of the difficulty of the task and of the stakes involved in the exercise.

We were also and above all convinced of the urgent need to endow the United Nations, our common instrument, with new bases to enhance its effectiveness and strengthen its authority and credibility, in order better to enable it to meet the expectations of peoples facing the many challenges of the third millennium. That is the spirit in which my delegation entered the consultations on reform, both within the Group of Friends of the President of the General Assembly and in the plenary meetings.

That is why, in my first statement in the debate, I outlined a procedure that was to lead, at the appropriate time, to the adoption of legal instruments whereby the General Assembly would endorse the reform proposals before the session was suspended.

The meeting we are devoting today to the adoption of that project, in accordance with resolution 52/12, adopted by consensus in November, therefore reinforces our conviction and common faith that we have all been working together on behalf of what has been called the "spirit of reform". My delegation feels that this is an encouraging sign of revitalization and a powerful message of support for our Organization. Another indication of the importance of these reforms is the final communiqué adopted by the recent Islamic Summit in Teheran, in which the Secretary-General is called on to pursue the important exercise of United Nations reform.

Clearly, since reform is a process, the phase we have completed today is not an end in itself, but an important milestone in a long-term endeavour whose fulfilment will coincide, we hope, with the definitive settlement of the Organization's financial crisis.

In conclusion, I wish to pay a sincere tribute to the Secretary-General for the courage, vision and hard work he has invested, along with his team of staff, in this reform programme. I also wish to congratulate you, Sir, for the competence, patience and spirit of openness and conciliation with which you have guided our debates. These congratulations also go to the Permanent Representatives of Botswana and Ireland who, at your side, did outstanding work as facilitators.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): As we prepare to wind up this round of meetings of the General Assembly, it is with a clear sense of pride that we recognize the achievements made at this session towards the goal of reforming the Organization and making it more representative of the aspirations of Member States. This result, Sir, we certainly owe to your keen sense of diplomacy, your patience and, not least, to your proverbial sense of humour, which have helped to improve the atmosphere of so many meetings. We have witnessed in the negotiations of this resolution, as well as in the previous stage related to the actions proposed in the report of the Secretary-General, abundant evidence of your dedication to consensus building, for which we are most grateful.

I also wish to pay tribute to the leading role of our colleagues, the Permanent Representatives of Botswana and Ireland, Ambassadors Legwaila and Campbell, in conducting the informal consultations which made this result possible, even if I could not participate in any Irish whisky party.

Brazil is fully committed to the goals of the reform. In this spirit, we welcomed the proposals of Secretary-General Kofi Annan as a sign of renewed vitality within the United Nations. We recognize and feel very much inspired by this new sense of leadership that is driving the Organization. We encourage the Secretary-General to proceed vigorously in the implementation of the actions which received the endorsement of the General Assembly.

As for the recommendations, we are glad that agreement could be reached on such important elements of the reform as the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General, the conceptual terms for the strengthening of the role of the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security, the need to increase the availability of resources for development cooperation, the reinforcement of United Nations action in the humanitarian field, and the establishment of the development account.

We will continue to endeavour to reach agreement on other important elements of the reform that have been referred to further consideration by the intergovernmental machinery of the Organization, especially in the areas covered by resolutions 50/227 and 51/241.

It is a fact that in some instances we were able to achieve consensus in the preliminary consideration of the proposals only by deciding to invite the Secretary-General to further elaborate on them taking into account the views expressed by Member States.

In this vein, and already responding to the call made in paragraph 26 of the resolution just adopted, I wish to point out that we hold strong reservations in relation to the proposal for a new concept of trusteeship. We are yet to be convinced, for example, that, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General,

> "Member States appear to have decided to retain the Trusteeship Council" [A/51/950, para. 85]

And we do not see a solid case in favour of the idea that the Council should be reconstituted as a forum for the exercise of collective trusteeship of the global environment and common areas such as the oceans, atmosphere and outer space.

In our view, the international community has already established the appropriate regimes and specific

forums for the enhancement of international cooperation in relation to the environment and the so-called global commons. We do not see how the proposal for a new concept of trusteeship, which has a very precise meaning in international law and which has evolved during the course of history, can add any significant value or practical effect to the efforts already made in a number of United Nations bodies and conventions.

We are confident that these concerns will be taken into consideration by the Secretary-General as he further elaborates on his proposals.

We fully agree with the statement made by the Ambassador of China on this particular point.

In concluding, let me assure the Assembly once more of the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation in the ongoing process of the reform of the United Nations.

Mr. De Rojas (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We are particularly pleased that the General Assembly has finally adopted this important resolution on an item that we have been considering for so long. As the Assembly knows, the Venezuelan delegation has from the very beginning resolutely supported the bulk of the reform proposals put forward by the Secretary-General, not only because we believed that they were good and appropriate, but also because, in some cases, it was important to give the Secretary-General the benefit of the doubt and our support at such a crucial time in the history of, and for the future of, the United Nations. We have always believed, in the Secretary-General's words, that this is our reform, and not a reform imposed by any particular country or sector.

With regard to the text adopted, we wish to state here our understanding of one of the components of paragraph 26. The fourth element mentioned in that paragraph refers to the idea of establishing a Special Commission at the ministerial level to examine possible amendments to the Charter of the United Nations and the treaties from which the specialized agencies derive their mandates. As we have previously indicated, we welcome this idea with the utmost interest, but we believe that in order for it to be truly complete the mandate of the ministerial Commission should include the review of the agreements establishing the relationships between the United Nations and the international financial institutions — the so-called Bretton Woods institutions — and also the possibility of establishing a more substantial institutional relationship between the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. We hope that this will be taken into account during the further elaboration of the proposals.

We wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your brilliant leadership on this item during the past three months, and also to convey through you our sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General and to wish him every success in implementing these decisions and measures.

Ms. Wensley (Australia): I am very pleased to speak this evening not only on behalf of my own delegation, but also on behalf of the delegations of Canada and New Zealand, to welcome the adoption of this important resolution on "United Nations reform: measures and proposals".

This consensus resolution demonstrates the commitment of the Member States of the United Nations to an ongoing process of reform and reinvigoration of the Organization. It is an achievement of which we can feel genuinely proud. The delegations of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which have worked energetically and systematically for many years to promote reform, believe that the measures and proposals adopted today, and also those endorsed by Member States last month in resolution 52/12, will strengthen significantly the United Nations. They will, we believe, result in more effective coordination of United Nations activity system-wide, more cohesive United Nations action in the field, significant economies that can lead to a development dividend and the reorganization of structures within the Secretariat to reflect today's needs. As a consequence, put very simply, the United Nations will be able to deliver more focused and better programmes.

We would encourage the Fifth Committee to deal promptly in the future with those elements of the Secretary-General's reform package requiring Fifth Committee consideration so that these can be funded and implemented expeditiously in accordance with the commitment undertaken by Member States embodied in both of these resolutions.

We would not be at this point today were it not for the initiative and drive of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and I am very pleased that he has been able to rejoin us. His report, "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" [A/51/950], drew on and took forward reform efforts which were previously under way, such as those in the high-level working groups; it launched a far-reaching

process of much-needed Secretariat reform and provided essential impetus to intergovernmental consideration of reform measures and proposals during this session of the Assembly. For this, and for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the Organization, we owe him substantial thanks.

The delegations of Canada, Australia and New Zealand also want to offer our very warm thanks to you, Mr. President, and to the Permanent Representatives of Botswana and Ireland, for the assiduous, patient and good-humoured efforts made to broker often-difficult agreement on this resolution among Member States with very differing perspectives. We have also appreciated the assistance of the Secretary-General's reform team and other members of the Secretariat in responding to Member States' concerns on specific issues by promptly producing conference room papers and by attending informal meetings to answer the many questions that were put forward and to provide the further clarifications that were requested.

The Secretary-General, in his now very frequently quoted statement, has rightly emphasized that reform is a process and not an event; but he has also underlined the importance of the road ahead, including in his important statement to us at the beginning of discussions today. Our three delegations are committed to working with him on a continuing basis, with you, Mr. President, and with the Member States of the Organization to help implement these proposals, to develop new ideas and so to continue to improve the ability of the United Nations to command the full confidence and support of the international community and thus fulfil the purposes for which it was created under the Charter as we move into the twenty-first century.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation endorses the statement made by the representative of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Assembly has just adopted by consensus draft resolution A/52/L.72/Rev.1 under agenda item 157 of the General Assembly, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals". Thus, following the adoption on 12 November last of resolution 52/12 on the same item, today marks the commencement of the reforms as a dynamic process that will enable our Organization to meet the challenges of the next millennium.

I should like to take this solemn opportunity to convey to you, Sir, our sincere thanks and congratulations for your personal and tireless efforts to achieve this consensual conclusion of such a difficult process of consultations. In this connection, I cannot fail to thank with profound appreciation the Permanent Representatives of Botswana and Ireland, your two co-facilitators, for their laudable contribution to this precious consensus that today makes it possible to label our Assembly for posterity as "the reform Assembly".

Credit, of course, is largely due to the Organization's Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, the initiator and artisan of these reform proposals and measures. We commend him for the historic role that he has played, with its driving impetus towards the future. I should like to take this opportunity to express to him our clear and firm support in the implementation of these reforms, to the elaboration of which the Member States have also contributed actively and constructively.

Because of the extreme importance that it attaches to these reforms, Algeria was fully involved in the consultations leading to this consensus, which — despite the imperfections in the drafting of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the resolution that has just been adopted — nevertheless does strike a reasonable balance between the concerns of Member States and those of the Secretariat.

My delegation would like to underscore that the implementation of reforms can fall only within the well-defined context of mandates, decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly as well as of the medium-term plan. The resolution, as we adopted it, is a strong positive signal both to the international community and to the United Nations system per se. Member States have generally favourably welcomed the reform proposals and have embraced them, taking whenever necessary to seek additional information or to refer them for review and implementation to the competent bodies. This action is undeniably a major breakthrough for our Organization while awaiting the implementation of the far-reaching reforms in other bodies such as the Security Council.

Lastly, my delegation, while welcoming this advance, would like to underscore the importance of ensuring a careful and scrupulous follow-up to the reform proposals in order to avoid any departure from them that may be to the detriment of the efficiency and democratic balance of our Organization.

Mr. Sharma (India): We wish to congratulate you, Sir, on the determination with which you, assisted by the Permanent Representatives of Botswana and Ireland, have brought our discussions on the Secretary-General's

reform proposals to their successful conclusion. We thank the Secretary-General for responding so positively to the suggestions and requests for clarifications that Member States made during the debate which have facilitated this outcome.

Having adopted the resolution, we shall be Members of the reformed United Nations and therefore permitted, I suppose, to regard ourselves as a type of protestants. While we do not wish to paste any theses on the glass doors of the General Assembly, we do wish to recall the five broad reasons put forward over the last year to justify reforms and to query where we stand in respect to them.

The starting point, or the first cause, was that the United Nations had been led towards bankruptcy because large assessed contributions were not being paid and the hope had been held out that if the United Nations were to cost less, the arrears would start flowing and thus, if through reform the United Nations made itself cheaper, it could see some of the monies it was owed. This has not transpired. The United Nations has placed a cap, but the cap on arrears has not been removed.

The second reason was that if the United Nations development system pulled its act together, more funds would flow into it. The latest reports from the Heads of the organizations of the system, including the report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) administrator on the "Review of policy implications of change and non-core funding", issued on 20 November, show that UNDP's core resources declined in 1996 and were expected to decline even further in 1997. Non-core resources had grown, but 62 per cent of these monies came from programme countries, not from donors. There is nothing to show that the trend so clearly seen in the UNDP and other bodies of the United Nations development system will be arrested or turned around by the reforms we have adopted. We have not heard any donors say so.

A third justification heard was that sections of international public opinion being disenchanted with the United Nations, a swift adoption of a resolution on actions would mollify these sections, watching with some scepticism what the fifty-second session of the General Assembly would do; the adoption, thereafter, of a resolution on recommendations should successfully convert the sceptics. We did adopt the resolution on actions. If this was met with applause, it has not been heard in this Hall. The vast majority of those further afield on this planet do not have even a dim awareness of the reforms, which would be noticed if they made a felt difference to their lives.

This indeed was the fourth reason for reforms. The United Nations was created to make the world a better place to live in, to promote, in the words of the Charter, "better standards of life in larger freedom". For us, and for our colleagues in the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, reform of the United Nations is useful only if it helps the Organization serve the mass of humanity better. All administrations from time to time do tinker with structures, initiate experiments, shuffle posts around an organogramme. The test lies only in these mutations being made productive. An international civil service should be allowed the same indulgence, but we are all aware that this in itself cannot be productive reform, which shall be known by its fruits. With what expectation do we await this harvest?

A fifth reason came in here. The development dividend was meant to show that reform was productive, that reform would free money for development activity within the United Nations budget itself. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) has made it clear that the United Nations is now caught between the Scylla of the budget cap and the Charybdis of the development dividend. There is no assurance that mandated programmes of vital interest to developing countries can in fact be fully executed within an arbitrary ceiling, lowered further by $12 million kept apart for the dividend. On the other hand, nor is there any assurance that the dividend can be maintained as the Organization's budget continues to shrink. On this reason for reform, it would be politic to suspend judgement.

Nevertheless, in this supreme and unique world body, which embodies the collective aspirations of all mankind, we engage ourselves with faith and optimism, recognizing in this season of goodwill that, while we may not have gone very far in wiping every tear from every eye, we have trust in the shared destiny of the nations united here and dedicated to reaching for it.

We hope that these reforms will strengthen the hands of the Secretary-General, whose sincerity and dedication in promoting the ideals and objectives of the United Nations we admire. We have taken a large step. Others will follow. However, while committing ourselves today to an act of faith, we want to believe that what we approve together are not cosmetic changes; that they will lead to real improvements and gains in the working of the United Nations; and that they will yoke the United

Nations system to making a felt impact on the lives and human richness of the citizens of the Governments represented here. As we have said throughout these discussions, this will be the touchstone by which we will judge the success of reform.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to express to you, Sir, our deep thanks for your efforts and those of your friends, the representatives of Botswana and Ireland, in preparing the resolution adopted today by the General Assembly. We should also like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his proposals aimed at reforming and renewing the United Nations, an exercise that my country fully supports.

The resolution adopted this afternoon partially reflects our concerns and we therefore joined the consensus on it. We would have preferred, however, that it explicitly reflect our stated positions on many issues, including the establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General, broad negotiations with Member States, and fair geographical distribution.

We have expressed in informal consultations our concerns on operative paragraph 5, which invites Member States to improve the supply of information to the Secretary-General that could assist the Organization to prevent conflict and maintain international peace and security. We would stress once again that any information to be submitted in accordance with this provision must be treated cautiously and objectively in order to ensure the advance approval of the State concerned and that its sovereignty and territorial integrity are not encroached upon.

As the Secretary-General has rightly pointed out, the reform of the United Nations is an ongoing process. The resolution adopted today was a step in that direction. We hope that serious reforms will be undertaken in the immediate future, especially in the major organs, and more specifically the Security Council, which should become more representative in membership and more democratic in its decision-making process. The Council must not be exploited by some Powers in order to achieve their objectives.

In conclusion, I would assure you, Sir, that my country will cooperate with you, all Member States and the Secretary-General in order to streamline the United Nations and render it more effective and able to meet the challenges of the future.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I wish to thank everybody for their participation in the elaboration of the very important decision we adopted today by consensus, in spite of reservations and differing statements, which I think are very encouraging and will help the Secretary-General to implement this decision. They will also help us to participate actively and with 100 per cent transparency in the further deliberations on this issue.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 157.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.